

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1499
ANSWERED ON:22.08.2007
US RESTRICTIONS ON R-1 VISA
Chaudhary Shri Pankaj

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that the U.S. has imposed some conditions on extending R-1 visa facilities to Hindu Priests and other persons engaged in religious and ritual activities;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has received any representation from the American Hindu Organizations and religious institutions in this regard; and
- (d) if so, the steps taken in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE)

- (a)–(b) The Government are aware of the conditions laid down by the US government for issuing 'R' Visas to Priests and other persons engaged in religious and ritual activities. Details are enclosed as an annexure.
- (c) The Government have not received any representation/s in this regard from American Hindu organizations or any other religious institutions so far.
- (d) Does not arise.

ANNEXURE REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A)-(B) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1499 REGARDING 'US RESTRICTIONS ON R-1 VISA' FOR ANSWER ON 22.08.2007

CONDITIONS LAID DOWN BY UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FOR ISSUE OF R VISA

Apart from remitting the required non-refundable visa fee of US \$ 100, duly filled visa form DS-156 and DS-157, one photograph, photocopies of the Passport (specially first, last and address page), the applicant has to submit the following supporting documents as proof that the applicant and the religious organization qualify for 'R' status-

- (i) Proof of tax-exempt status or eligibility for tax-exempt status of the organization.
- (ii) A letter from an authorized official of the specific unit of the employing organization certifying:
 - a. That if the applicant's religious membership was maintained, in whole or in part, outside the United States, the foreign and United States religious organizations belong to the same religious denomination;
 - b. That, immediately prior to the application for the R visa, the applicant has been a member of the religious denomination for the required two year period;
 - c. That, if the applicant is a Minister, he or she is authorized to conduct religious worship for that denomination. The duties should be described in detail; or
 - d. If the applicant is a religious professional, he or she has at least a Baccalaureate degree or equivalent, and that such a degree is required for entry into the religious profession; or
 - e. If the applicant is to work in a non professional vocation or occupation, he or she is qualified if the type of work to be done relates to a traditional religious function;
- (iii) the arrangements for remuneration, including the amount and source of salary, other types of compensation such as food and housing, and any other benefits to which a monetary value may be affixed, and a statement whether such remuneration shall be in exchange for services rendered;
- (iv) the name and location of the specific organizational unit of the religious denomination or affiliate for which the applicant will be providing services; and if the applicant is to work for an organization which is affiliated with a religious denomination, a description of the nature of the relationship between the two organizations:

(v) evidence of the religious organization's assets and methods of operation; (Constitution/ Articles of Association of the organization); and the organization's papers of incorporation under applicable state law and certified/audited financial statements of the organization for the last three years; and membership list of the organization and any other document to show that it is financially stable.